

# Workforce Observations

## For The North Central WDA

### July, 2002



### *Job Numbers Inch Upward in June*

**T**he number of people employed in the Upper Wisconsin River Valley district increased slightly in the month of June, but the emphasis should be placed on the word “slightly”. Total nonfarm employment in the most recent month was about 207,500, which was a jump of about 3,000 jobs over May levels. This may seem like a lot, but 3,215 positions in a field of about 207,000 is not a lot, statistically. When we compare the total employed in June to the same period of last year, the gap is even smaller – just over 500 more people working this year. By almost any comparison, we would have to say that the absolute level of employment in the Valley is unchanged over the whole year.

Increases in jobs in manufacturing were almost dead even in June compared to May, and declined compared to the same period of 12 months ago by about 2,400 positions. The lion’s share of this decline from last year came in durable goods manufacturing. The same held true of total trade and services, both gaining about 2,200 and 1,300 respectively. They did pick up some employment compared to the previous month, with service putting on about 1,600 workers.

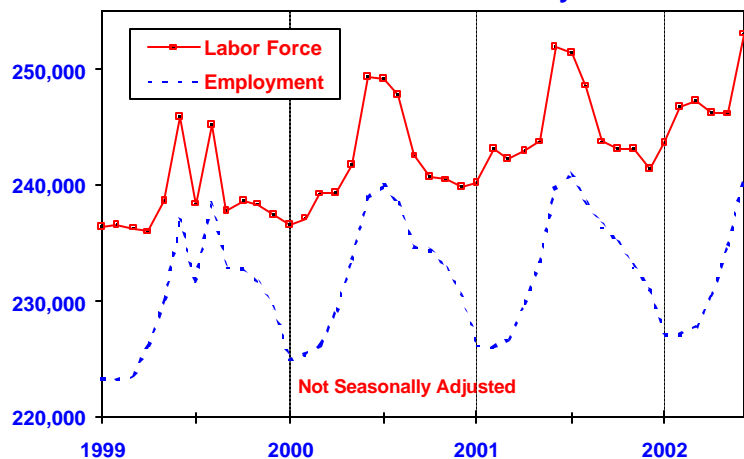
All things considered, it must be said that the job picture is not exactly vigorous, if you describe vigorous as more jobs today than ever before in an early summer month.

Compared to the other counties of the state in June, the counties of the Upper Wisconsin River Valley stood up rather well. The picture was mixed in the northern areas, with Vilas County showing an unemployment rate of 3.5 percent. That’s somewhat higher than for June of last year, but historically a very good rate for that county. Langlade and Lincoln were quite a bit higher, showing rates of over 6.0 percent. The core counties of Portage, Marathon, and Wood had unemployment rates more typical of an early summer month, but there was a slight increase from May levels. The Wood County

level went up to 5.5 percent from 4.8 and Marathon went up to 4.3 percent from a very low May level of 3.9.

But, these slight jumps in rates were common around the state in the most recent month. Sixty-one of all the 72 counties of Wisconsin showed an increase from the levels of the previous month. Not surprisingly, metro rates also went up, with Racine showing a rate of over 10 percent. Overall, these jumps in unemployment seem a bit odd for one of the warm months, but there are reasons why it could be happening. For one thing, we’re talking about data that has not been seasonally adjusted. Since the survey used

**Civilian Labor Force  
Wisconsin River Valley**



to determine these things is done at about the middle of the month, there are presumably thousands of students, both high school and college, that are spilling out into the job market just before the survey is taken. Most of these people may still be unemployed at mid month, looking for that summer dream job, and would theoretically push the labor force numbers up. In fact, the total labor force jumped by over 6,000 workers in the nine-county Wisconsin River district, and by more than 70,000 statewide. A healthy increase in labor force totals anywhere is going to have the effect of increasing the rate of unemployment, as well.

*Please visit the Marathon County Job Center Website!  
We are presently housed at a temporary location at Tripod and  
can be found at this addie—  
<http://freelmi.tripod.com/maracent.html>*

In the occupational arena, it was recently announced that a new hospital/health care facility would be opening possibly within the next two year's in the Weston area. The proposed capacity of this place would be about 200 beds or more, and it should be online in about two years. One could assume that there is a need for another hospital in our area, and this need is supported by studies. But, whatever problems arise from this project, it is certain

that staffing will be one of the most serious. The In-Demand Occupations list for the River Valley indicate health occupations to be the fastest growing in our area, and this list was prepared well before the new hospital was proposed. Registered nurses were to add about 150 jobs between 1998-2008 and nurse aids about 220, and this is only two occupations out of many that will be needed for staffing here. Unfortunately, demand has far out-



stripped supply, regardless of efforts by local teaching institutions and recruiters to get more people. It's going to be a crunch, no matter what.

Month of June	Adams	Forest	Lang.	Lincoln	Mara.	Oneida	Portage	Vilas	Wood	Region
<b>Labor Force</b>	8,764	4,943	9,514	14,739	75,891	21,577	37,888	11,750	41,674	226,740
Employed	8,438	4,656	8,909	13,846	72,953	20,576	36,180	11,318	39,659	216,535
Unemployed	326	287	605	893	2,938	1,001	1,708	432	2,015	10,205
Unemployment rate(%)	3.7	5.8	6.4	6.1	3.9	4.6	4.5	3.7	4.8	4.5%
<b>Total, all industries**</b>	4,560	3,516	8,087	12,386	70,869	19,569	33,371	9,552	45,662	207,572
Construction & Mining	200	115	378	387	2,903	1,538	1,127	1,021	1,672	9,341
Manufacturing	422	492	1,675	3,865	18,093	2,071	5,815	448	9,803	42,684
Transportation & Util.	210	227	395	489	4,206	667	2,000	213	3,355	11,762
Wholesale Trade	141	42	349	417	5,303	557	1,530	266	1,510	10,115
Retail Trade	916	522	1,841	2,348	13,604	5,477	6,031	2,828	8,107	41,674
FIRE	100	105	267	751	4,737	456	3,615	300	981	11,312
Services	1,341	472	1,966	1,971	14,257	5,966	7,331	2,230	15,022	50,556
Government	1,230	1,541	1,216	2,158	7,766	2,837	5,922	2,246	5,212	30,128
Change from previous mo.	Adams	Forest	Lang.	Lincoln	Mara.	Oneida	Portage	Vilas	Wood	Region
<b>Civilian Labor Force*</b>	-488	-130	-219	-353	-1,213	-1,489	-799	-781	-543	-6,015
Employed	-460	-106	-175	-280	-837	-1,411	-622	-776	-246	-4,913
Unemployed	-28	-24	-44	-73	-376	-78	-177	-5	-297	-1,102
Unemployment rate(%)	-0.1	-0.3	-0.3	-0.3	-0.4	-0.1	-0.4	0.2	-0.7	0.0
<b>Total, all industries**</b>	199	132	132	195	485	830	307	938	61	3,279
Construction & Mining	17	35	35	16	187	98	77	56	87	608
Manufacturing	11	17	17	57	212	48	225	8	213	808
Transportation & Util.	6	-45	-45	2	-137	-29	-17	6	-6	-265
Wholesale Trade	-6	5	5	15	142	16	-5	18	45	235
Retail Trade	28	76	76	41	61	365	-12	386	-96	925
FIRE	2	5	5	9	19	14	-8	8	20	74
Services	148	36	36	37	271	379	69	403	250	1,629
Government	-7	3	3	18	-270	-61	-22	53	-452	-735
Change from year ago	Adams	Forest	Lang.	Lincoln	Mara.	Oneida	Portage	Vilas	Wood	Region
<b>Civilian Labor Force*</b>	-35	194	-496	-425	-1,759	-576	-737	-336	-683	-4,853
Employed	-37	214	-427	-514	-1,553	-715	-427	-393	-183	-4,035
Unemployed	2	-20	-69	89	-206	139	-310	57	-500	-818
Unemployment rate(%)	0.0	-0.7	-0.3	0.8	-0.1	0.7	-0.7	0.6	-1.1	0.0
<b>Total, all industries**</b>	238	236	-99	-220	-469	353	219	290	9	557
Construction & Mining	9	-14	-117	-233	-601	56	-270	-59	-356	-1,585
Manufacturing	-19	-57	-122	-363	-1,179	-183	-103	-100	-370	-2,496
Transportation & Util.	26	22	30	24	179	-11	158	-31	81	478
Wholesale Trade	22	-10	-128	-18	173	171	-144	116	69	251
Retail Trade	-18	13	-84	-110	1,230	97	556	379	-78	1,985
FIRE	-6	9	11	491	-158	-17	-140	-19	52	223
Services	206	-41	349	33	-17	232	-104	-61	730	1,327
Government	18	314	-38	-44	-96	8	266	65	-119	374

\* Includes participants residing in area. \*\* Includes employment with employers located in area. Estimates are NOT seasonally adjusted. Current month estimates are preliminary. Totals may not add due to rounding. Calculations based on unrounded numbers.

Look for the most current Labor Market Information at: [WWW.DWD.STATE.WI.US/LMI](http://WWW.DWD.STATE.WI.US/LMI)  
 Direct questions and comments to: **Dennis Goodwin, Labor Market Analyst**  
 Marathon County Job Center, 364 Grand Ave., Wausau, WI 54403  
 715-261-7745 715-261-7757(FAX) e-mail: [goodwd@dwd.state.wi.us](mailto:goodwd@dwd.state.wi.us)